

# Life Group Discussion Guide

No Greater Love – Part 2: Remaining in Jesus  
Week 2: Spiritual Fruit that Lasts • John 15:9–17

Last week, we explored the metaphor Jesus gives us of the vine and the branches. Jesus is the true vine, and His followers are the branches, who, by remaining in Him, bear much fruit. Today, we'll see how Jesus expands on this teaching by helping us understand what kind of fruit His branches produce.

## 1. The Fruit of Obedience

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.” John 15:9–10

What does it mean that Jesus loves us as the Father has loved Him? Scripture tells us that God the Father loves the Son with a perfect, limitless love. And Jesus modeled the same for His disciples. How? He (1) kept the Father’s commands and (2) remained in the Father’s love.

The ultimate demonstration of this love is found at the cross. On Calvary, Jesus submitted Himself to the Father’s plan by willingly suffering the horrendous death you and I deserve. In doing so, He both obeyed the Father and loved us—just like He said in the verses above.

- Explain in your own words how Jesus has loved us in the same way the Father has loved Him. Give examples from Scripture and your relationship with Him.
- What does Jesus’ love mean to you, personally? Be specific.

Jesus then calls on His disciples to follow the example He’s set by keeping His commands and remaining in His love, just as He has done unto the Father. What does this look like in the life of a believer? Earlier in John’s Gospel, Jesus is recorded as saying, “If you love me, keep my commands” (14:15), and here He states, “If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love.” Jesus is revealing a relationship between **love** and **obedience**.

This theme has been woven throughout our message series, and this week Pastor Blaine invited us to consider it from a new perspective:

*“Jesus’ call to obey Him is clear. But ask yourself, what is the motivation for my obedience? Am I obeying Him out of love, or from fear? Fear is a powerful motivator, but fear-based obedience is limited in scope and duration. It will eventually become a hard and burdensome duty. Love is a much more powerful and long-lasting motivator. We should fear, respect, and revere God to be sure. But our obedience must go beyond fear to love.”*

- Has your obedience to Jesus been motivated primarily by fear or love? Why do you answer that way?
- Why does genuine love for Jesus produce the fruit of obedience? Have you experienced this in your own life? Talk about it.

## 2. The Fruit of Godly Joy

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." John 15:11

It's amazing to consider that, within hours of speaking these words, Jesus would be brutally tortured and killed. Hebrews 12:2 holds the same paradox: "For the **joy** set before him he endured the cross." Through His sacrificial death on the cross, Jesus' joy would not end, but come to its fulfillment. What a mystery! Jesus is unveiling a connection between perfect love, perfect obedience, and perfect joy.

Although His disciples didn't understand it at the time, Jesus' joy—completed on the cross—would become their own. This joy is not a temporary emotion based on circumstances, but a lasting state founded on knowing and loving Christ, by which we experience His divine power and perfection, His goodness and grace.

- How does the joy Jesus offers differ from the happiness this world advertises?
- How do we gain access to the unconditional joy of Jesus?

## 3. The Fruit of Self-Sacrificial Love

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other." John 15:12-17

Earlier, Jesus told His disciples that if they love Him they will keep his commands. Here He reveals what His command is: "Love each other as I have loved you." How does Jesus love us? By sacrificing Himself as the ultimate example of what it is to "lay down one's life for one's friends."

In the same way, when we remain in Jesus, He will produce in us the fruit of self-sacrificial love. What does this kind of love look like?

*"I urge us not to have a shallow, culture-based view of what it means to love each other. It's more than being sweet and nice, accepting, and agreeable. Loving each other like Christ loved us goes way beyond that. It's a self-giving love that lays down our own lives—our comfort and convenience, even our safety—for others. To love each other in self-sacrificial ways, in obedience to God, and with godly joy, that's what we're called and empowered to do as we remain in the Vine."*

- How does Jesus' standard of love differ from the world's definition of it?
- What are practical ways **you** can self-sacrificially love others? Allow Jesus' high standard of love, "to lay down one's life," to challenge you. Be specific in your answers.

In closing, Pastor Blaine shared a final, important clarification about the spiritual fruit Jesus is teaching us about:

*"Producing this lasting spiritual fruit is impossible in your own strength. Fruitfulness in your life will come only through your union with Christ and fellowship with Him. It's miraculous. It can only be produced through a true friendship with Jesus Christ."*

This reality points to our **Big Idea: True friendship with Jesus will produce lasting spiritual fruit.** So, turn to Christ. Surrender to Him. Remain in Him. Love Him. Obey Him. As we've seen week after week, this type of friendship with Jesus is anchored in His commands—in His Word—so study it and live it.

- Which of the three fruits we discussed today most resonates with you: obedience, joy, or self-sacrificial love? What would it look like for you to remain in Jesus so you can bear this fruit?
- Are there habits or patterns in your life that need to change so you can grow in friendship with Jesus? Are you willing for the dead branches to be cut away, and for good branches to be pruned, to make room for a harvest of lasting spiritual fruit? Pray together now and ask the Lord to show you what He wants to change. Discuss what He reveals to you and how, specifically, you will walk in obedience.